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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 SEOUL 01180

MONTREAL ICAO FOR USREP

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PTER, PREL, KS, US, KN, UR, CH
SUBJECT: KA 858: AMB OKUN'S MEETING WITH FM CHOI ON UN
SECURITY COUNCIL STRATEGY

REF: (A) USUN 219 (B) SEOUL 875

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.
2. SUMMARY. DURING A JANUARY 28 MEETING WITH AMBASSADORS
LILLEY AND OKUN, FOREIGN MINISTER CHOI EXPLAINED ROKG
PLANS FOR RAISING KA 858 IN VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL FORA,
INCLUDING THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL WHICH CHOI TERMED THE
"MOST IMPORTANT". THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE WISHES TO
DEFER UNTIL FEBRUARY 5 A DECISION ON WHETHER AND HOW TO
PROCEED IN THE COUNCIL. HE INDICATED THAT HE IS CURRENTLY
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INCLUDINED TO RAISE KA 858 AS A MATTER FOR SECURITY
COUNCIL DISCUSSION WITH OR WITHOUT A FOLLOW-ON
RESOLUTION. HE SUGGESTED THAT THIS APPROACH WOULD BEST
ACHIEVE THE ROKG'S TWIN OBJECTIVES OF MINIMIZING A
POSSIBLE CONFRONTATION WITH THE SOVIETS AND CHINESE, AND
MAXIMIZING FAVORABLE PUBLICITY FOR SOUTH KOREA'S CASE
AGAINST PYONGYANG. CHOI MADE IT CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THE
ROKG IS RELUCTANT TO PROCEED UNLESS IT IS "100 PERCENT
SURE" IT CAN GET THE NINE VOTES NECESSARY TO INSCRIBE KA
858 ON THE COUNCIL'S AGENDA. AMBASSADOR OKUN EXPRESSED
AGREEMENT WITH CHOI'S PROPOSED APPROACH AND THE NECESSITY

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ROBERT J. MARTENS
DATE/CASE ID: 28 OCT 1998 199403292

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TO OBTAIN A CLEARER PICTURE OF SUPPORT FOR INSCRIPTION BEFORE PROCEEDING. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR CAREFUL PREPARATION AND RELIANCE ON THE ADVICE OF OUR RESPECTIVE UN MISSIONS, PARTICULARLY ON TACTICAL AND PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS. END SUMMARY.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER CHOI KWANG SOO HOSTED A WORKING LUNCHEON JANUARY 28 IN HONOR OF AMBASSADOR HERBERT OKUN, U.S. DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UN. AMBASSADOR LILLEY, POLCOUNS KARTMAN AND POLOFF MILLER ATTENDED FROM THE EMBASSY. CHOI WAS ACCOMPANIED BY ASSISTANT FOREIGN MINISTER PARK SOO GIL, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS BUREAU DIRECTOR GENERAL KIM SAI TAIK, AND UN DIVISION DIRECTOR HWANG YONG SIK.

4. THE FOREIGN MINISTER NOTED THAT THE ROKG GREATLY APPRECIATES OUR STRONG SUPPORT ON KA 858 AND LOOKS FORWARD TO CONTINUED CLOSE COOPERATION WITH US. HE SAID THE ROKG IS GENERALLY PLEASED BY SUPPORT FROM JAPAN AND OTHER FRIENDLY COUNTRIES, MANY OF WHICH HAVE ISSUED STATEMENTS CONDEMNING NORTH KOREA. (NOTE: ACCORDING TO DIRECTOR GENERAL KIM, 41 COUNTRIES HAVE SO FAR ISSUED SUCH STATEMENTS AND THE ROKG WANTS TO "KEEP UP THE MOMENTUM" BY
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RAISING KA 858 IN VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL FORA DURING THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, ITS OBJECTIVE BEING TO DISCOURAGE PYONGYANG FROM UNDERTAKING FURTHER ACTS OF TERRORISM AIMED AT DISRUPTING THE SEOUL OLYMPICS.

5. DIRECTOR GENERAL KIM INDICATED THAT THE ROKG CURRENTLY PLANS TO RAISE KA 858 AT THE FOLLOWING UN AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS: THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION'S FEBRUARY 1-MARCH 11 SESSIONS IN GENEVA; ICAO'S FEBRUARY 9-24 AIR LAW CONFERENCE AND FEBRUARY 29-MARCH 14 COUNCIL MEETING; THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY UNION'S APRIL MEETING IN GUATEMALA; AND THE JUNE SUMMIT IN OTTAWA. IN RESPONSE TO A QUERY BY AMBASSADOR LILLEY, KIM NOTED THAT BONN HAS ASSURED THE ROKG THAT IT IS PREPARED TO RAISE KA 858 AT THE OTTAWA SUMMIT. (COMMENT: WE HAVE REPEATEDLY STRESSED TO MOFA OUR OPPOSITION TO RAISING KA-858 IN THE ICAO AIR LAW CONFERENCE. SEPTEL WILL ADDRESS THIS ISSUE IN MORE DETAIL. END COMMENT.)

6. CHOI SAID THE ROKG REGARDS THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL AS THE "MOST IMPORTANT" INTERNATIONAL FORUM IN WHICH TO FOCUS WORLD ATTENTION ON NORTH KOREA'S CRIME. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT SUCH PRESSURE MIGHT NOT DETER PYONGYANG FROM FURTHER TERRORISM, HE NOTED THAT THE ROKG SEEKS, IN PART, TO QUIET THE VOICES OF THOSE HERE WHO STILL FAVOR MILITARY RETALIATION. HE AVERRED THAT THE ROKG'S PRINCIPAL CONCERN IN RAISING KA 858 IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL IS TO

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AVOID A PUBLIC CONFRONTATION WITH THE SOVIET UNION OR CHINA, WHICH MIGHT JEOPARDIZE THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE SEOUL OLYMPICS AND ONGOING ROK EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THEM. HE ADDED THAT A SECOND ROKG CONCERN

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IS TO ENSURE BEFOREHAND THE COUNCIL'S SUPPORT FOR
INSCRIBING KA 858 ON ITS AGENDA LEST SEOUL SUFFER A DEFEAT
ON THIS ISSUE WHICH COULD ADVERSELY EFFECT THE RULING
PARTY IN THE UPCOMING NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTION HERE.

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7. REVIEWING THE FOUR APPROACHES PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED BY MOFA AS OPTIONS FOR RAISING KA 858 IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL (REF B) -- (A) DISCUSSION LEADING TO A RESOLUTION; (B) DISCUSSION ONLY; (C) STATEMENT BY THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT; OR (D) A PUBLIC STATEMENT BY CHOI HIMSELF WHICH WOULD BE CIRCULATED AS A SECURITY COUNCIL DOCUMENT -- AMBASSADOR OKUN INDICATED THAT WE WOULD SUPPORT ANY COURSE THE ROKG CHOOSES. HE ADDED THAT WE STRONGLY AGREE THAT THE NORTH

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SHOULD BE BROUGHT BEFORE THE BAR OF WORLD OPINION FOR ITS HEINOUS CRIME, WHICH APPEARS TO BE THE FIRST CASE OF STATE-DIRECTED SABOTAGE OF A CIVILIAN AIRLINER. AMONG THE STRATEGIES PROPOSED, AMBASSADOR OKUN NOTED THAT A PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT WOULD HAVE RELATIVELY LITTLE PUBLIC RESONANCE BECAUSE SUCH STATEMENTS DO NOT NORMALLY RECIEVE MUCH PUBLICITY. ASSISTANT MINISTER PARK ADDED THAT IT WOULD ALSO HAVE TO BE ADOPTED BY CONSENSUS WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE SOVIETS TO WATER IT DOWN.

8. FOREIGN MINISTER CHOI SAID HE IS CURRENTLY INCLINED TO OPT FOR DEBATE OF KA 858 IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL WITH OR WITHOUT A FOLLOW-ON RESOLUTION. IN HIS VIEW, THIS APPROACH WOULD ENSURE BOTH MAXIMUM PUBLICITY FOR THE ROK'S CASE AND AN OPPORTUNITY FOR FRIENDLY COUNTRIES TO SPEAK OUT IN SUPPORT OF SOUTH KOREA. (ACCORDING TO ASSISTANT MINISTER PARK, THE ROKG EXPECTS SUPPORTIVE STATEMENTS FROM AT LEAST 10 COUNCIL MEMBERS AND 20 OTHER COUNTRIES.) CHOI ALSO OPINED THAT THE SOVIETS AND CHINESE MIGHT CONSIDER SUCH A DEBATE ACCEPTABLE INASMUCH AS THEY WOULD NOT BE OBLIGED TO TAKE A POSITION. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE ROKG MIGHT SEEK TO FURTHER ALLAY THEIR CONCERNS BY COUCHING ITS INITIAL PRESENTATION IN TERMS OF A GENRAL CONDEMNATION OF TERRORISM WITHOUT NAMING NORTH KOREA.

9. AMBASSADOR OKUN JUDGED THAT THE USSR AND CPR WOULD PROBABLY NOT OBJECT TO A COUNCIL DEBATE ON KA 858, PARTICULARLY IF CARE WERE TAKEN TO AVOID PRESENTING THE CASE AS AN EAST-WEST ISSUE OR RAISING SUCH MATTERS AS THE SOVIET 1983 SHOOT-DOWN OF KAL 007. AMBASSADOR LILLEY SPECULATED THAT MOSCOW AND BEIJING MIGHT EVEN WELCOME A DEBATE AS A MEANS OF REINING IN PYONGYANG; INDEED, THE

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CHINESE RECENTLY HINTED TO US IN BEIJING THAT THEY MIGHT NOT TRY TO BLOCK A SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON THE

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INCIDENT IF THE NORTH WERE NOT NAMED.

10. DRAWING ON REF A, AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT A DEBATE OFFERS A PROCEDURAL ADVANTAGE IN THAT IT CAN BE REQUESTED BY ANY COUNTRY, INCLUDING THOSE WHICH ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE UN, AND DOES NOT REQUIRE A COUNCIL VOTE FOR INSCRIPTION ON ITS AGENDA. HE ACKNOWLEDGED, HOWEVER, THAT A VOTE WOULD BE NECESSARY IF ANY COUNCIL MEMBER OBJECTED. ALTHOUGH ASSISTANT MINISTER PARK EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE ROKG WOULD BE ABLE TO SECURE THE NINE VOTES NECESSARY FOR INSCRIPTION, THE FOREIGN MINISTER DISAGREED, ASSERTING THAT THE ROKG MUST BE ABSOLUTELY SURE OF THESE VOTES BEFORE DECIDING TO PROCEED, PARTICULARLY SINCE IT CAN BE ASSUMED THAT PYONGYANG WILL LAUNCH A DIPLOMATIC CAMPAIGN TO BLOCK THE COUNCIL'S CONSIDERATION OF KA 858. CHOI SAID HE THEREFORE WISHES TO DEFER A DECISION UNTIL FEBRUARY 5 BY WHICH DATE HE HOPES THAT WE AND THE ROKG WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE A DEFINITIVE ASSESSMENT OF COUNCIL SUPPORT.

11. ASKED BY ASSISTANT MINISTER PARK WHETHER FEBRUARY 5 WOULD BE TOO LATE, AMBASSADOR OKUN REPLIED THAT THE SOONER A DECISION IS MADE THE BETTER. HE AGREED THAT THERE IS AN URGENT NEED TO SOUND OUT THE INTENTIONS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS, BOTH IN NEW YORK AND IN THEIR CAPITALS, AND HE INDICATED THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO COOPERATE CLOSELY WITH THE ROKG IN CARRYING OUT SUCH SOUNDINGS. AMBASSADOR OKUN EMPHASIZED THE NECESSITY FOR CAREFUL PREPARATION OF THE ROKG'S CASE, NOTING IN THIS REGARD THE DESIRABILITY OF RELYING ON THE ADVICE OF OUR RESPECTIVE UN MISSIONS, PARTICULARLY ON PROCEDURAL AND TACTICAL QUESTIONS.

12. AMBASSADOR OKUN HAS SEEN AND CONCURS WITH THIS MESSAGE.

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